

# ORIENTATION OF NURSING ASSISTANT INSTRUCTORS

By

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### ABSTRACT

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Healthcare in the United States has been described as being in a state of crisis. One of the areas that is contributing to the problem is the current shortage of nurses. This has been given a lot of attention in the media and the public has responded with renewed interest in nursing and related programs. At one community college this has also resulted in an increase in enrollment in the Nursing Assistant Program, which is a prerequisite for many nursing programs in the state. The graduation rate for this program has increased 166 percent in the last four years. This increase in enrollment has lead to a demand for qualified instructors. The challenge has been to provide an orientation program for the nursing assistant faculty that will adequately prepare them to teach the program.

The purpose of this field problem was to solicit input from current instructors as to their orientation experience at the college. The review of literature explores the origins of training and the development of instructor excellence. It also looks at the history of nursing assistant training and why it is important to have good training. The results of the study revealed that there are some inconsistencies and gaps in the instructor orientation. It demonstrated that there is strong support for the expansion of an instructor manual and creation of a mentor role that is felt will greatly improve the orientation process.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction to the Field Problem

The purpose of this field problem is to determine whether or not an instructor manual is needed for the orientation of newly hired Nursing Assistant Instructors at a particular community college. The name of the college will remain anonymous. Hereafter the school will be referred to as the “college, or community college.” Currently there is no formal orientation for instructors. To meet the requirements established by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHFS) the primary instructor must:

- Have a minimum of two years experience working as a registered nurse, one year of which must be in the provision of long term care;
- Be a registered nurse licensed to practice in the home state; and
- Have completed a course in teaching adults or supervising nurse aides.

To meet the training requirement they are given a set of train the trainer videos to watch. A current instructor spends an unspecified amount of time reviewing course materials with the new employee and then the primary instructor is assigned a program to teach.

In the past two years the community college has had an increase in demand for offering Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) programs. In addition to the six to eight on campus classes offered each semester, it has several contract classes, which are offered off campus. This has made it necessary to hire more part-time faculty.

It had become apparent at staff meetings and informal conversations with the researcher, that there were some inconsistencies in the way in which the instructors deliver the training program to the students. Among them, inconsistent enforcement of attendance guidelines; inadequately



written progress reports with failure to document pertinent information; difficulty completing the curriculum in the required time period, and failure to properly maintain student records.

This researcher has attempted to have informal contact with new instructors to gain data and allow instructors to voice their concerns. In addition, two years ago the researcher assembled a manila folder with samples of first day handouts and some written guidelines which had loosely been referred to as the “orientation manual”. The researcher recognizes that a more comprehensive, organized binder along with mentoring could provide new faculty with the tools needed to produce a higher quality program for the students and greater satisfaction for the instructor. A detailed instructor manual would organize program materials and give step-by-step instructions on how to conduct the class. This chapter will present the problem statement, objectives, and significance of an instructor manual.

### Introduction to the Community College

The community college is one of several colleges within the college system. Its mission is to be a leader in the development of the workforce for the county in which it resides, and is committed to student learning for the enhancement of the community’s quality of life and that of the individual learner. It values quality in educational and professional excellence through continuous improvement and responds to the changing needs in the community.

### Problem Statement

This field problem will evaluate the current orientation process of nursing assistant instructors and the need for an instructor manual to provide a more structured training experience for the newly hired faculty.

### Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To solicit input from all instructors as to their orientation experience as a nursing assistant instructor at the community college.
2. To determine the need to develop an instructor manual.

### Significance of the Study

There is currently a serious nursing shortage in the United States. The college had been aware of this before it began to catch the eye of the media. In 1999 they initiated a countywide referendum, which called for expansion of the health care facilities on campus. They educated the community on the growing need for health care workers and the resulting classroom and lab space that would be needed to train them. Although it meant an increase in property taxes, residents passed the referendum in 2000. In fall of 2001 a new building opened containing additional classroom and skill labs to support the nursing and allied health programs.

The Nursing Assistant Training Program is a prerequisite for students enrolled in the nursing program. There are currently hundreds of students on the waiting list for the associate degree in nursing program. In addition, certified nursing assistants are in demand in the community, and they can readily find employment upon successful completion of the program. The classes contain a mix of students whose intention it is to enroll in the nursing program, and those who need to obtain the skills to enter the workforce to support themselves and their families.

The number of students enrolling in the nursing assistant program is growing. In 1999 the college graduated one hundred sixty-seven nursing assistants. In 2002 that number rose to 444, an increase of 166 per cent. This increase in enrollment has lead to a demand for qualified instructors. As a result, the college has hired more part-time instructors over the past three years.

In addition, full-time nursing faculty are offered the opportunity to teach a nursing assistant class as an additional assignment. Since this is not their primary job, an orientation is needed for them as well. In 1999 there were a total of six nursing assistant instructors, two full-time, the rest part-time. As of June 2003, there were five full-time and sixteen part-time faculty, for a total of twenty-one. This is an increase of 250 percent. Both the full time and part time instructors are limited by contact the number of classes they can teach each semester. In addition, the part-time instructors usually hold other nursing jobs because their part time status at the college is not benefited and has no guarantee of hours. Thus many instructors are needed to teach the programs.

#### Needs Statement

For many years the full-time instructors were almost exclusively responsible for presenting the classes. As a result there was consistency in the delivery of the program and the ability to maintain high quality and customer satisfaction. With the need to bring on more faculty there has also risen a need to provide a more structured orientation program. Insufficient orientation of instructors results in frustrated and ill-prepared faculty, and a decrease in student satisfaction as sometimes evidenced by student course evaluations.

#### Limitations

The limitations of the study are:

1. The results of this study are specific to the community college.
2. The researcher will only solicit information from the community college faculty even though all colleges in the system use this program.

### Assumptions

The assumptions of this study are:

1. The community college will not make any significant changes in the delivery of the nursing assistant training program.
2. The results will only affect the instructors at the community college and not any of the other schools.

### Definitions

The definitions are commonly used in healthcare and at the community college as they pertain to faculty, students, and the training of employees.

Associate Degree- A two-year graduate who attends a community or technical college and receives an associate degree (AD) in nursing. This AD registered nurse (RN) is trained primarily as a bedside nurse. (Rosdahl, 1994)

CNA- Certified Nursing Assistants are health care assistants who play an important role in the care of people who are ill or who cannot fully care for themselves. They work under the direction and supervision of licensed, professional health care workers, such as doctors and nurses. (Hegner & Caldwell, 1995)

LTC-Long Term Care refers to a healthcare facility that provides care for individuals of all ages who are permanently disabled due to injuries, such as motor-vehicle accidents, or who have a chronic illness. (Pulliman, 2002)

Orientation -Familiarization with and adaptation to a situation or environment as in a workplace. ( Webster's New World College Dictionary 1996)

Progress Report – Written documentation regarding a student's status in a course or program. To inform the student of any deficiencies in their performance and to provide recommendations for improvement. (Community college approved form)

Primary Instructor-The person designated by the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) as the program trainer who has met specific criteria to be considered to be qualified as instructors for the Bureau of Quality Assurance (BQA). The primary instructor of a nurse aide training program must: be a registered nurse licensed to practice in the state; have a minimum of two years of experience working as a registered nurse, one year of which must be in the provision of long term care; and have completed a course in teaching adults or supervising nurses aides. (State Nurse Aide Training Program and Directory Manual, 2001)

Instructional Program -A training program for nurse aides that is approved by DHFS, BQA. The state requires instructional programs to provide one comprehensive course to train persons to work in all health care facilities. (State Nurse Aide Directory Training Program and Directory Manual 2001)

Part -time instructor- An instructor with less than one-half of the normal full-time workload points or instructors with one-half or more of the normal full-time workload points, but not more than thirty-two points, and not under an individual contract with the community college and are scheduled to teach credit courses at the college for the first time. (Collective Bargaining Agreement between teachers union and the community college 2003)

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

The second chapter of the study will discuss the significance of training and the development of instructor excellence. The problem experienced at the community college has been the discovery that there are some inconsistencies in the way in which the instructors present the information to the students. This has been caused by an increase in the number of students enrolling in the nursing assistant program resulting in a demand for qualified instructors. With the need to bring on more faculty there has also risen a need to provide a more structured orientation program. Currently there is no formal orientation for part-time faculty.

The review of literature will describe the history of nursing assistant training, explore the origins of training, and the development of instructor excellence.

#### The Origin of Nursing Assistant Training

The Federal Nursing Home Reform Act became law with growing public concern over the poor quality of care being delivered to nursing homes residents. Consumers, advocates for the elderly, families, and health care professionals brought their concerns to the attention of Congress. Congress asked the Institute of Medicine to study how to better regulate the quality of care in the nation's Medicaid and Medicare certified nursing homes. Their report, *Improving the Quality of Care in Nursing Homes*, was published in 1986 and made sweeping recommendations. Among them, a minimum of 75 hours of training and testing of paraprofessional nursing home staff that is, the nursing assistants. Congress then rolled the separate Federal Nursing Home Reform Act, along with other separate bills into one to insure

final passage of all of the elements. The bill is entitled the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987, known by its common name OBRA.

Health care facilities would no longer be allowed to hire inexperienced employees to merely job shadow a current nursing assistant. Training henceforth would be required by law. Training is not only mandatory, but must also be provided by qualified health care professionals (Mosby, 1994).

### Training: a Historical Perspective

Training has been going on for centuries. “As man invented tools, weapons, clothing, shelter, and language, the need for training became an essential ingredient in the march of civilization” (Steinmetz, 1976, p.1-3). In order to pass along the knowledge about the above artifacts and language, teaching others to use them became one of the first goals of training.

One of the first forms of training was direct instruction, or on-the-job-training (OJT). On-the-job training is a face-to-face encounter with the person who knows how to do a task, teaching it to one whom does not. In ancient times it was used because the learner did not have to be able to read or write so one person could show another how to do a task. Most of the tasks were related to farming or making crafts. As OJT training evolved it developed into apprenticeships. Tools became more complex, and training required more than a parent just passing along the knowledge to their children. Thus children would live with a craftsman for years to learn the more specialized skills and master the craft. Production of the items was slow but craftsmen were able to keep up because the demand was low (Sleight, 1993).

### World Wars and Their Effect on Training

By World War I machines had become more automated due to the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s. Now there were factories created with classrooms to train machinists. “The old-style

apprentice system was inadequate” (Steinmetz, 1976, pp. 1-6). The invention of machines enabled goods to be produced quickly and at a lower cost so demand increased and trained workers were needed in greater numbers.

With each of the world wars came an urgent need to train large numbers of people to fill the demand for products. OJT still existed but a need was seen to revolutionize training. “With the growing complexity and size of factories, expanding markets that exerted a strong demand for an increase in the volume of production, and a rising engineering profession, there emerged a new and pressing concern to systematize the administration, control, coordination, and planning of factory work” (Zuboff, 1984, p. 41).

A training method known as Scientific Management was developed by Frederick Taylor around 1915. His technique shortened the amount of time it took to do a task by studying workers doing the task and removing “non-productive time”. This idea was further investigated by Frank and Lillian Gilbreth in which they studied workers movements and suggested ways to simplify the job by reducing the number of movements (Westgard, 1993).

During World War I the need to develop a method to train 450,000 shipbuilders in a short period of time was developed by Charles R. Allen. It involved four steps:

1. Show or prepare
2. Tell or present
3. Do or apply
4. Check or inspect

These four steps along with research done by the Army were used in industrial training but no formal method of systematic training appeared until World War II (McCord, 1976).



World War II also brought with it the need to train fast and efficiently. The National Defense Advisory Commission developed a four step OJT called Job Instruction Training (JIT). The steps were:

1. Prepare the learner. Put him at ease; explain the job and its importance.
2. Give a step-by-step presentation of the job. Explain the what, when, how, why and where of the job, then demonstrate.
3. Do the performance tryout. The learner does the steps under supervision.
4. Follow-up and inspect the work regularly.

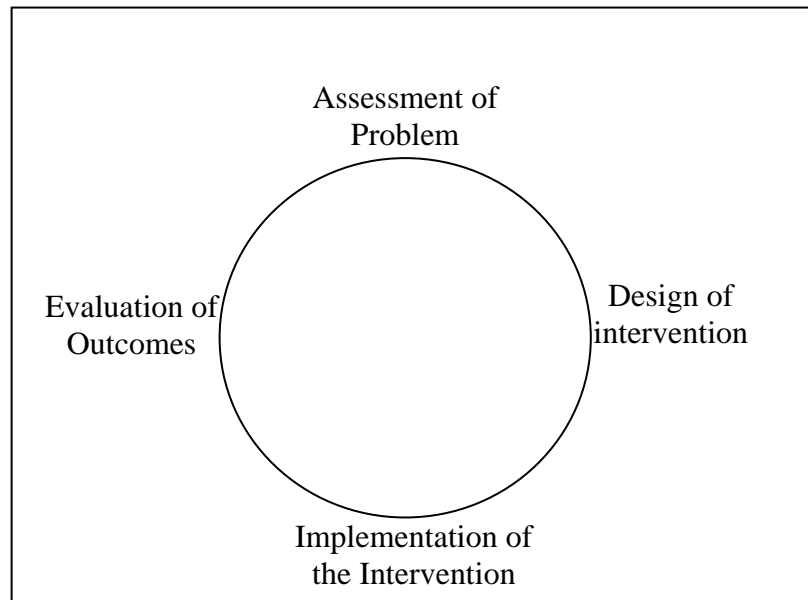
JIT proved to be an effective method of instruction for teaching manipulative skills, but had limited usefulness for more complicated tasks. In order to be successful, JIT required close supervision by plant managers and it could be time consuming (Sleight, 1993).

### Training After World War II

Training in the workplace continued to grow and evolve after World War II. Many companies had their own training departments but were always mindful of the bottom line and looked for ways to control costs. Research in the field of training has been extensive and several models have been developed that depict the training process. One that emerged was developed by Kurt Lewin, known as action research. The model proved to be flexible and emphasized a problem solving process that is continually reevaluated.

The action research model is depicted as a circle. At the top of the circle is assessment of the problem, followed by design of an intervention, implementation of the intervention and finally, evaluation of outcomes. Each element in the training cycle is a separate and distinct process.

(See figure 1)

**Figure 1: Action Research Model**

Assessment investigates the problem looking at organizational analysis, job analysis, task analysis, and person analysis. The design phase addresses how the problem will be solved through training. It is the phase of curriculum development and learning aids. The implementation is the actual delivery of the training program. The final phase, evaluation, measures the impact of training on the problem.

Research models force organizations to continually think about their roles and responsibilities. Training is no longer done just for the sake of training if it is tied into the organization's long-term plans (O'Connor, Bronner, and Delaney, 1996).

#### Planned vs. Unplanned Instruction

Organizations continually look for the most effective and efficient ways to deliver training. OJT training specifically may be the method of choice for a company but it may be planned (structured) or unplanned (unstructured). Unplanned OJT occurs at the workplace but does not occur in a logical sequence. It is not organized according to the learners needs; instead it is

driven by the demands of the job. Learners are expected to learn by watching experienced workers perform the tasks or by actually doing the work. This disorganized approach can lead to employee anxiety and thoughts of quitting.

Structured OJT is planned instruction occurring on the job and is centered around what workers need to learn in order to develop competence. A high quality, planned orientation leads to employee confidence and satisfaction. It has a positive effect on how the new employee perceives management and can ultimately affect the company's bottom line by improving employee retention (Rothwell and Kazanas, 1994).

#### Definition of Instructor Excellence

Training involves a set of complex activities. It is concerned with both the employee's and organization's performance. In any organization there is a constant need to provide training for new and existing employees. In other words, employees need to learn in order to perform for the organization. The trainer is instrumental in this learning process. The instructor might be a subject matter expert but may not possess the ability to be an effective trainer.

Research has been done to identify the most desirable characteristics in career and technical education teachers. These traits include: cooperation, kindness, patience, understanding, varied interests, excellent communication skills, pleasant appearance, pleasing manners, humor, positive attitude, consistency without rigidity, interest in students, commitment to teaching, acceptable values system and outstanding occupational skills and knowledge (Edmunds and Smith, 2001).

Instructor excellence refers to instructors whose performance meets and exceeds what is expected of them (Powers, 1992). Seven standards for instructor excellence were developed by Bob Powers. He spent years analyzing corporations to determine causes of performance

problems. He translated common causes of performance problems into simple yet positive statements about human beings and excellence. He suggested that people will perform with excellence if they:

1. have a well-defined job
2. are capable of doing the job
3. know what is expected of them
4. have the tools to do the job
5. have the necessary skills and knowledge
6. receive feedback on how well they perform
7. perceive and receive rewards for performing as desired.

Powers maintains that the seven components are interdependent and must be linked together to produce a result that cannot be achieved alone. Organizations that strive for instructor excellence must create an environment that supports it.

### Summary

Training has evolved over time and is recognized as essential for employees to gain the knowledge and skills that are required for their job. Training may be formal or informal. The more formal (structured) the training, the better the outcome for the employee. There is benefit to an organization as well. The employee is more confident, satisfied, and more likely to remain with the organization.

Training will be more effective with instructors who develop excellence in their ability as a trainer. An organization that expects excellence in its trainers- must create an environment that supports it.

## CHAPTER 3

### Research Methods

#### Introduction

The community college has experienced an increase in demand for the Nursing Assistant Training Program. In the past three years enrollment has increased 166 percent. As a result the college has hired additional part-time faculty so that more classes could be offered. It had become apparent at staff meetings, and informal conversations, that there were some inconsistencies in the way in which the instructors presented the information to the students. Among them, inconsistent enforcement of attendance guidelines; inadequately written progress reports with failure to document pertinent information; difficulty completing the curriculum in the required time period, and failure to properly maintain student records.

The objective of the field problem is to solicit information from current nursing assistant instructors to determine if there is a need create a more structured orientation program with the possible development of an instructor manual.

This chapter will detail the research design and method of data collection.

#### Research Design

The research design of this field problem includes investigating the quality of the orientation of current nursing assistant faculty. A qualitative approach was chosen to provide a means by which the researcher could judge the effectiveness of the existing orientation. Currently there is no formal orientation program for newly hired nursing assistant instructors. Research explored how employees are trained in organizations and the impact of training as it relates to instructor excellence. The community college claims in its mission statement that it is committed to student learning and has a special focus on occupational training programs. It further states it values

quality educational and professional excellence through continuous improvement. This implies a desire to examine how its instructors are trained to provide a quality learning experience for its customers, the students. In order to determine whether or not the orientation for the nursing assistant instructor is adequate, the researcher sought input from the faculty.

A questionnaire was developed and mailed out to all faculty who have been involved in teaching the nursing assistant training program. The questionnaire asked a combination of closed and open-ended questions about their orientation to the program and an orientation manual. The faculty was sent a cover letter explaining the need to gather information and a desire to provide an adequate orientation for new instructors. (See Appendix A).

The results of the questionnaire will be analyzed to determine if the college is meeting the orientation needs of nursing assistant faculty.

#### Population and Sample

The letter and questionnaire were sent out on May 29, 2003 to all full-time and part-time nursing assistant faculty, for a total of 18 instructors. They were asked to respond by June 14, 2003. To facilitate the return of the questionnaires, a stamped envelope with instructions to return the questionnaire to the researcher was included. The researcher informed them that their responses would remain completely anonymous. A confidentiality statement was included with the questionnaire. (See Appendix B).

All of the nursing assistant instructors were female registered nurses with at least one year of long term care experience and had previously completed a train-the-trainer program as required by the DHFS. The sample included both those instructors who only teach the CNA program for the college, and other faculty who teach other courses, but conduct CNA training programs as an additional assignment during the summer.

The number of nursing assistant instructors is relatively small (21), so the researcher made a decision to solicit input from all of them.

#### Instrumentation

In order to obtain relevant information the respondent's were asked to answer specific questions regarding their orientation and teaching experiences at the college. The goal was to obtain knowledge of the orientation process from the perspective of each instructor. Their input might lead to change in the way instructors are trained. After the questionnaire was developed, the researcher asked two other full-time instructors and the director of research, planning and evaluation, to review it and make any recommendations. The director of research, planning and evaluation suggested that information be solicited only from experienced, not new instructors. As a result, only 18 of the 21 instructors were sent questionnaires. The researcher was also excluded.

#### Response Rate

Data collection yielded 12 responses. This is a response rate of 67 percent. The questionnaire contained some closed and open-ended questions, allowing the instructors to express themselves freely. Chapter four will analyze and interpret the data. Themes that repeat will be identified, although all of the comments will be included in Appendix C.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of the field problem was to examine the orientation process of newly hired Nursing Assistant Faculty at the community college, and determine if there is a need to develop an instructor manual. Through staff meetings and informal conversations between instructors, the researcher noticed inconsistencies in which the same information was taught to students. In addition there was inconsistent enforcement of attendance guidelines, inadequately written student progress reports with failure to document pertinent information, difficulty completing the curriculum in the required time, and failure to properly maintain student records. Eighteen part-time and full-time faculty were surveyed to obtain information, from their perspective, regarding their orientation and teaching experiences at the college. The questionnaire yielded 12 responses for a response rate of 67 percent. This chapter will summarize the findings, addressing each question that was put to the instructors. All of the comments can be found in Appendix C.

#### Results of Question #1

The first question asked the faculty, “What resources would you like to see included in an orientation manual?” The response to this was overwhelmingly in favor of having a manual to include all of the items listed. Table 4.1 gives the percentages of each item.

Other comments requested the desire for a list with phone numbers of resource people such as, weekend/evening campus supervisors and counselors, and a handout with bookstore and library information. One person wanted more information on the state required competency testing which follows after the students complete the required curriculum.



TABLE 4.1

**Percent of respondents in favor of handouts to be included in orientation manual:**

First day handouts including explanation of each.	100%
Examples of student progress reports.	66%
Sample class schedule.	92%
Forms for attendance, skill check off, grades, etc.	92%
Copy of written test with answer key.	92%
Attendance guidelines.	100%
Information on classroom management.	83%
Copy of classroom evaluation.	92%
Copy of clinical evaluation.	92%

Results of question #2

The second question asked, “Do you have any concerns with the orientation process for Nursing Assistant Instructors”? Eleven faculty (92 percent) responded to this question. The researcher rated the responses as either positive or negative. One response was disregarded as it pertained to the instructors desire to see another program have the same format as the nursing assistant program. That response has no bearing on evaluating the orientation of CNA instructors. Therefore, ten of the responses were analyzed.

Four of the ten responses (40 percent) revealed positive responses, and six (60 percent) were negative. The positive responses indicated that they felt their orientation was adequate and had been individualized to meet the needs of the instructor. One instructor commented that the clinical orientation was “brief but adequate to provide safe care to residents.”

The negative responses indicated that there were inconsistencies or gaps in the orientation process. That is, the instructors received a varying quality of orientation. One participant noted that “information needs to be presented to all instructors, including old instructors, so that we’re all on the same page.” There should be a mentor available who will “provide guidance and feedback...and new instructors should receive an evaluation by another seasoned instructor

regarding teaching abilities based on clearly defined criteria.” Another respondent brought up a point mentioned in the first question regarding the need for a list of resource “person/persons to direct questions so that three different answers are not given to the same question.”

### Results of question #3

The third question asked, “Did you feel adequately prepared to teach your first CNA class? If not, why not?” All twelve, (100 percent), of the participants responded to this question. They answered with a “yes” or “no” followed by additional comments.

Seven (58 percent) responded “yes”, and five (42 percent) “no”. For those that responded yes there were very few additional comments. The instructors generally felt that they had an opportunity to watch an existing instructor and asked questions when needed and therefore were ready to teach on their own. One person was not responsible for classroom instruction, only the lab and clinical portion of the program, and thus felt “adequately prepared”.

The five who responded negatively gave more detail as to their preparation. One felt there were very few people available for support because she taught a weekend program. Others would have liked more orientation to the audiovisual equipment, a separate orientation class just for new instructors, more orientation with the skills to be taught to the students, and an experienced instructor available at the clinical site. One person was emphatic and commented that, “I did not feel I had enough orientation with the skills to be taught”! but added, “I do have to add the support from the surrounding co-workers is extraordinary.”

### Results of question #4

The fourth question asked the faculty to, “Describe any difficulties you had with your first teaching assignment and identify how we might have helped you through them?” Ten (83 percent) of the participants answered this question. All of the responses were negative as was

expected due to the nature of the question. They were being asked to describe any *difficulties* with their first assignment, this would elicit negative responses.

This question did not produce any common themes. That is, each instructor experienced different problems when teaching her class. All of the comments are in appendix C, but a few make significant points that will be reported here.

One participant felt the secondary instructors, who act as an assistant to the primary instructor, were, "challenging at times, and that they should be given more responsibility such as paper work, setting up and, cleaning up the lab." Another who taught with a second instructor discovered "how different we taught things...neither was incorrect but the way each of us stressed different ideas brought about mixed signals to our students." One instructor experienced difficulties with students' she hadn't expected and felt, "the instructor should have more power with the type of student who is enrolled in this class along with support of our supervisor."

Some of the participants expressed frustration asking for "more orientation"! and another describing that she had, "no one to ask questions to...had to come in during the week to talk regarding my concerns." In one final comment, an instructor noted that it would have been helpful to, "be the second instructor-at least for the first class."

#### Final comments and additional suggestions

In closing the questionnaire, the researcher asked participants to use the reverse side to provide any additional suggestions for future orientations and an instructional manual. Only four (33 percent), chose to make additional comments. Two of those pertained to including more information on the competency testing which is required by the state after a student successfully completes the program. Specifically they are looking for, "detailed guidelines for all of us to see and teach the class" and, "incorporate the competency expectations into the lab check off."

Another asked for inclusion of personnel issues such as an “explanation of workload/typing of the class and prep time you can be compensated for (as a part-time instructor).” Finally, one participant would like “access to an instructor who is a CNA coordinator (workloaded to serve as a resource to part-time faculty)...I would feel less reluctant to bother an instructor who already has an assignment which is full-time.”

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this field problem was to examine the orientation process of nursing assistant instructors at a community college. Through informal conversations with fellow faculty, and comments made at staff meetings, it became clear that there were some inconsistencies in the way in which the instructors present the information to the students. In addition there were difficulties with program management including; enforcement of attendance guidelines, inadequately written student progress reports with failure to document pertinent information, difficulty completing the curriculum in the required number of hours, and failure to properly maintain student records.

The community college had experienced tremendous growth over the past four years, offering more nursing assistant classes to meet student demand. As a result, many new part-time faculty, and existing full-time instructors were needed. There is no formal orientation for nursing assistant instructors at the college which may have contributed to the problems identified above.

This chapter will review the field problem, summarize the results of the study procedures and offer recommendations based on the results of the study.

#### Statement of the problem and research objectives

The field problem evaluated the current orientation process of nursing assistant instructors and the need for an orientation manual to provide a more structured training experience for the newly hired faculty. To accomplish this, the objectives were to solicit input from all instructors regarding their orientation experience at the community college, and to determine the need for an orientation manual.

### Summary of the study problem

A questionnaire was developed and mailed out to all faculty who have been involved in teaching the nursing assistant training program. The number of nursing assistant instructors is relatively small (21), so the researcher made the decision to solicit input from all but three of them. Those excluded were the researcher herself, and two faculty who had been recently hired, but had not yet begun to teach their summer programs.

In order to obtain relevant information, the participant's were asked to answer specific questions regarding their personal orientation and teaching experiences at the college. The researcher also wanted to obtain their input on the materials that would be most helpful in an orientation manual, and so designed a question to elicit that information. The questionnaire also asked for additional suggestions for future nursing assistant instructor orientation.

Eighteen questionnaires were sent out containing a self addressed stamped envelop asking the participants' to return them within two weeks. Data collection yielded 12 responses, for a response rate of 67 percent. The researcher had had recent fact-to-face contact with the entire faculty, and therefore had expected a response rate closer to 100 percent. Nonetheless, the researcher feels that the responses are valid and reflect a realistic picture of the orientation of new nursing assistant instructors at the college. In retrospect, a follow up phone call or post card might have yielded a higher response rate.

### Conclusions and implications

The research problem was to investigate the orientation process of nursing assistant instructors at a community college and to determine if an orientation manual was important to faculty and worthy of continued development. The response demonstrated that the faculty were

nearly unanimous in their support of an orientation manual. Of the items listed as important to the contents of a manual, all were supported by 66 percent or more of the faculty.

The results of the remaining questions presented some concerns with the orientation process among more than half of the instructors. Negative responses indicated that there are inconsistencies and gaps in the orientation process. Several comments revealed the need to have a mentor or support person available to provide guidance and feedback. Only slightly more than half of the instructors said they felt prepared to teach their first class, and 83 percent reported difficulties with their first teaching assignment. The researcher sensed frustration as evidenced by some of the comments and exclamation points on the returned questionnaires.

When instructors indicate that they are ill prepared to teach a course, the outcome can be frustrated and anxious employees as supported by the review of literature in chapter two (Rothwell and Kazanas, 1994). A high quality, planned orientation leads to employee confidence and satisfaction. It has a positive effect on how the new employee perceives management and can ultimately affect the companies' bottom line by improving employee retention.

The steps of the action research model developed by Kurt Lewin can be used to address the orientation process of nursing assistant instructors. First, assess the problem of orientation, second, design an intervention to determine how the problem will be solved through training, third, implement the training intervention and finally, evaluate the outcome, i.e. instructor effectiveness and student satisfaction

The results of the questionnaire clearly indicate that meeting the minimum requirements established by DHFS are not enough to ensure that an experienced nurse can successfully teach a

CNA training program without a more structured orientation and detailed instructor manual to use as a reference.

With the increase in demand for nursing assistant programs, and instructors who are limited by contract the number of classes they can teach each semester, it is important to retain a large number of faculty to meet this demand.

Another consideration is customer (student) satisfaction. If the college continues to provide additional classes but doesn't adequately orient new faculty, the quality of the program will suffer and this may be evidenced by negative student feedback and a decrease in enrollment. Taken to its logical conclusion, if customers are not satisfied, they will take their business elsewhere. A decrease in enrollment can lead to loss of tax dollars to support programs. Virtually all of the states in the United States are facing record deficits at present and thus, fewer dollars are going to colleges, and positions are being cut.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the results of the field problem study.

1. A structured orientation program should be developed for nursing assistant instructors to ensure instructor readiness.
2. Develop a comprehensive orientation checklist to ensure that the same information is consistently disseminated to all nursing assistant instructors.
3. Once the checklist is developed, it should be reviewed by all current nursing assistant faculty to determine whether or not, existing faculty have the same information pertaining to the program.
4. Expand the existing orientation manual into an organized binder that has detailed guidelines for all of the sections.



5. Rename the orientation binder to “instructor manual” to more accurately reflect its contents.
6. Include items suggested by faculty in the instructor manual, specifically:
  - a directory with resource people and their phone numbers
  - a reference sheet with library and bookstore information
  - a section on the state mandated competency testing, with step-by-step instructions on how to best prepare the students for it upon successful completion of the program.
  - blank pay slips with instructions
  - an incident report and example of how it is to be written out
  - list of videos which are not required to be shown in class
  - example of a student progress report with attendance issues
  - fraction test with answer key to same
  - how to find your crn (course registration number) and obtain a class list
7. Workload a full-time instructor to coordinate the orientation all nursing assistant faculty.
8. Workload a full-time instructor to act as a mentor/support person to all nursing assistant faculty.
9. Establish regular paid staff meetings for all nursing assistant faculty. Once prior to the start of each semester, and midway through each semester, for a total of four times per school year.
10. Evaluate teaching effectiveness of all new faculty through direct observation.

#### Recommendations for future research

In reviewing the field problem study, the researcher would have made some minor changes to the methodology. Demographic questions may have provided additional insight into analyzing

the results. It's possible that adding questions related to teaching experience, and length of time at the community college, might have been influenced the findings. Perhaps experienced faculty were the ones who responded favorably to their orientation experience at the college. In any case, the results did show that there are some inconsistencies with the orientation process, and that was valuable information to obtain.

Future research might include:

- Surveying the existing faculty in one year to assess their current ability to effectively teach the nursing assistant training program.
- Surveying faculty hired since this study, but only if significant changes have been made with the orientation process. Compare the results.
- Monitor student feedback forms for customer satisfaction. The assumption could be made that their satisfaction, or lack thereof, is directly related to instructor readiness to teach the program.

Finally, the researcher does intend to share this field problem study, and the results with her supervisor, as she is committed to instructor excellence, customer satisfaction, and student retention.

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## APPENDIX A

May 31, 2003

Nancy Radke  
Nursing Assistant Instructor  
Community College  
Anywhere, USA

Dear Nursing Assistant Instructor,

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire regarding the development of a training manual for the orientation of Nursing Assistant Instructors at Community College. Some questions will also ask you to reflect on your Nursing Assistant orientation experience at the college.

There has been an increase in demand to provide nursing assistant classes which has resulted in the need for more instructors. I'd like to solicit feedback from you for the most effective way to prepare an instructor to teach the program.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire is to be returned in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by **June 14<sup>th</sup>** 2003. Please do not put your name on it.

The information you provide will be used to improve the orientation for instructors of nursing assistants. Your input is very much appreciated. If you have any questions I can be reached at the above address. My phone number is (262) 827-1114.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Nancy Radke  
Nursing Assistant Instructor

## APPENDIX B

## Questionnaire Regarding Orientation of Nursing Assistant Instructors at Community College

1. What resources would you like to see included in an orientation manual?

- ☐ First Day Handouts including explanation of each
- ☐ Examples of Student Progress Reports
- ☐ Sample class schedule
- ☐ Forms for Attendance, Skill Check off, Grades, other?
- ☐ Copy of written tests with answer key
- ☐ Attendance guidelines
- ☐ Information on classroom management
- ☐ Copy of classroom evaluation
- ☐ Copy of clinical evaluation

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you have any concerns with the orientation process for Nursing Assistant Instructors?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you feel adequately prepared to teach your first CNA class? If not, why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe any difficulties you had with your first teaching assignment and identify how we might have helped you through them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please use the reverse side to provide any additional suggestions you have for future orientations and an instructional manual.**

I understand that by returning this questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that no identifiers are needed and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

**Note: Questions or concerns about participation in the research or subsequent complaints should be addressed to Nancy Radke, the researcher at 262-691-5149 or Dr. Joe Benkowski, the research advisor at 715-232-5266. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, Wi, 54751, phone 715-232-1126.**



## APPENDIX C

## RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

**1. What resources would you like to see included in an orientation manual?**

- 12 Firsts day handouts including explanation of each
- 8 Examples of student progress reports
- 11 Sample class schedule
- 11 Forms for attendance, skill check off, grades, other?
- 11 Copy of written test with answer key
- 12 Attendance guidelines
- 10 Information on classroom management
- 11 Copy of classroom evaluation
- 11 Copy of clinical evaluation

**Other comments:**

1. On Campus resources i.e. ESL person to contact/phone number: weekend supervisor/phone number, library times; bookstore times.
2. Functional abilities-probably first day handout
3. Which videos are not required to be shown in class (list). Give example of student progress report with attendance issues. Information on classroom management helpful for those who have not taught.
4. Everything to do with competency testing.
5. Blank schedule sheets; blank pay slips; how to find your crn (course registration number) number; library information; incident report; state application for competency testing with note regarding identification information.

6. If responsible for classroom teaching I would want the tests but as lab assistant I don't feel this is necessary. I observed the orientation of two instructors when I came into the program and thought it very helpful for them to observe the lecture/video balance before taking on full class responsibility themselves.
7. General suggestions (practical type of tips): covering issues not included in official testing information for certification.

**2. Do you have any concerns with the orientation process for nursing assistant instructors?**

**Comments:**

1. No. It should be individualized according to the needs of the instructor.
2. Inconsistent-Nursing Assistant instructors receive varying quality of orientation.  
Need to have mentor who will provide feedback and guidance. New instructors should receive evaluation by another seasoned instructors regarding teaching abilities based on clearly defined criteria.
3. List of resource person/persons to direct questions so that three different answers are not given to the same question.
4. I would like to see the same format taught in the associate degree classes. That way if you are a subbing for a teacher all you have to know is what week the instructor is on and you would be able to jump right in. I realize all instructors have different styles of teaching but the format, when a certain topic is taught, in what order the topics are taught should be able to be made up.
5. Orientation for new cna instructors should be held on a separate day just for the new instructors.

6. I believe they should always orient first for a couple days in class then in clinical and then be a secondary instructor at least once before going on their own.
7. I had a good orientation and support with lab check off. Clinical orientation was brief but adequate to provide safe care to residents.
8. Just that it be uniformly presented to all instructors, including old instructors, so that we're all on the same page.
9. Orientation meeting was helpful. Overview was helpful at the beginning of semester after being off a semester. I was less concerned knowing I had access to Nancy's expertise if needed during school year.
10. Tour of the college, i.e., where is the library, cafeteria, bookstore, learning center, etc. In addition to the paperwork.
11. No

**3. Did you feel adequately prepared to teach your first CNA class? If not, why not?**

**Comments:**

1. Yes, I felt well prepared because I could watch the existing instructor for a time.  
The class size is too large.
2. No, I did not because I taught on the weekend and there were very few people around. I was left to figure things out on my own.
3. Yes.
4. Yes, for the most part. Asked questions when needed. The department meeting/orientation in fall was helpful.
5. No, I was told to show up on a certain day. When I got there the instructor I was co-teaching with was very helpful. We worked together very well.

6. No. More “smart cart” orientation would’ve been helpful.
7. No. I needed a separate orientation class just for new instructors. This orientation would explain the manual, including a sample class schedule. A present instructor should assist the new instructor at the clinical site.
8. No. I did not feel I had enough orientation with the skills to be taught! I do have to add the support from the surrounding co-workers is extraordinary.
9. Yes. I was not responsible for teaching in the classroom, only lab and clinical and for this I felt adequately prepared.
10. Yes.
11. Yes-generally! As much as possible for the first time around. I also had fairly extensive teaching experience-so general teaching issues were not a concern.
12. Yes.

**4. Describe any difficulties you had with you first teaching assignment and identify how we might have helped you through them.**

**Comments:**

1. The secondary instructors at times were challenging. They should be given more responsibility for example-paperwork, setting up the lab cleaning up the lab. They don’t know the students as well as they should.
2. It would have been helpful to be the second instructor-at least for the first class. I had no one to ask questions to. Had to come in during the week to talk regarding my concerns.
3. None

4. I was not familiar with all the videos prior to the class-perhaps some instructor feedback on some of the tapes would have helped. Be sure all instructors are aware of any changes to class.
5. I taught with another instructor. I shared the class, we get along fine and we continue to teach together but what we learned in our first class together was how different we taught things. Neither way was incorrect but the way each of us stressed different ideas brought about mixed signals to our students.
6. Projector bulb blew out half way through first six weeks evening class. Should we know where a replacement is and how to replace it?
7. My biggest difficulty was the type of students that were enrolled in the contract class. My next class was much better. I feel the instructor should have more power with the type of student who in enrolled in this class along with support of our supervisor.
8. More orientation! The experience that every instructor may teach a skill a little different but we are all headed for the same goal! There may be more than one way to complete the task!
9. Soon found out in clinical that supervision of students called for reducing the complexity of the patient assignment.
10. Developing a workable class schedule for the weekend class was my biggest challenge. I had an instructor that I could call for advice. That was helpful.
11. Differences between isolation video and skill check list caused a bit of concern. A brief overview of more complicated skill to clarify discrepancies.
12. No comments.

Please use the reverse side to provide any additional suggestions you have for future orientations and an instructional manual.

1. Although a personnel issue-perhaps an explanation of the workload/typing of the class. As an instructor what prep time you can be compensated for (as a part time instructor). What are the responsibilities of the instructor when students are watching video in library?
2. I would also like to see, if it is not already done. If we are doing competency testing, (and I am under the impression we are), then detailed guidelines for all of us to see and teach the class. I really like the ready-made schedules that I have worked with for the last two classes and for the one that is starting in the summer. I also like that the lab is posted and is ready. That way any instructor can look at the sheet and see what labs are when. As far as communication goes, I am unable to attend most of the staff meeting due to my daytime job. I like it that the staff meeting minutes are sent email. I am wondering if more communication can be done via email when information comes about. Thank you for putting together the questionnaire.
3. If competency testing is going to continue it would be helpful to incorporate their expectations into the lab check off so we don't have to add "with competency testing they will expect you to..."
4. An orientation manual will be helpful-although I already received an extensive amount of material to get off to a great start. Thank you! On another note-I would appreciate access to an instructor who is a CNA coordinator (workloaded to serve a resource to part time CNA faculty. If there was a workload CNA coordinator, I

would feel less reluctant to bother an instructor who already has an assignment which is full time.